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Three in Congress once with KGB, says author

By Bill Gertz
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A French journalist has charged that three members of the U.S. Congress and a West German parliamentarian once worked as agents of the Soviet KGB intelligence service.

Author Thierry Wolton, in his recently published book, "The KGB in France," doesn't name the legislators but says that a high-ranking KGB official code-named "Farewell" gave the names to Western intelligence officials in 1981.

An FBI source said no U.S. congressmen have been investigated as a result of information supplied by the KGB official.

But the source said a congressional aide was investigated in late 1981 for what was described as either "casual or naive" contact with a hostile intelligence service. No arrest was made because of a lack of evidence, the source said.

"Let us reveal nonetheless that among the names given were those of three members of the U.S. Congress and one West German parliamentarian," Mr. Wolton wrote.

Mr. Wolton told The Washington Times in Paris he would not comment further on the allegations contained in the book, in which he wrote that his account of the high-ranking double agent was based on the "author's private sources." But intelligence specialists said information in the book appears to have originated from files provided by the French intelligence service, DST.

The book, published in France last month, states that French President Francois Mitterrand turned over a file on Farewell directly to President Reagan during a 1981 meeting in Ottawa. Mr. Wolton also states that French intelligence officials worked together with Vice President George Bush in supplying details of the Farewell file.

A spokesman for Mr. Bush said the vice president would not comment on the Farewell case because of the government's policy of not commenting on intelligence matters.

A former correspondent for the once-left-wing Paris newspaper Liberation — at one time linked to the French Communist Party — Mr. Wolton has since changed his views and now regularly contributes to the conservative French newsweekly magazine Le Point. He is considered to be an expert on the Soviet KGB.

The book claims that information from Farewell led to investigations of suspected Soviet agents in several countries, including the United States, and resulted in the expulsion of 47 Soviet officials from France and 39 Soviets from other European countries and the United States.

According to the book, Farewell served in Moscow as a "Line X" officer within Directorate T of the KGB's First Chief Directorate (foreign intelligence) — the bureau responsible for scientific and technological espionage.

Farewell reportedly supplied the names of the entire "Line X" section officers and "the identity of the principle agents recruited by

officers of Line X in a dozen countries, including the United States, Federal Republic of Germany, and in France," the book states.

Because of his position, Farewell was not allowed to leave the Soviet Union and was under surveillance by KGB guards who watch top intelligence officials to prevent defections or flight, the book says.

One U.S. intelligence source, who declined to be named, said Farewell's information on agents in the United States should be viewed with caution because, as a Line X officer, Farewell would have been shielded from the identities of KGB agent sources.

Another intelligence source, who also declined to be named, said Farewell's data was the basis for the most detailed public intelligence assessment of Soviet technological acquisitions ever published, a white paper released by the Pentagon last September.

Farewell, who served in the Soviet Embassy in Paris during the 1960s, was the first source of information revealing the existence of the Soviet's Military Industrial Commission, known by its Russian acronym VPK. The VPK directs all technology collection by the KGB and its sister service, GRU military intelligence.

According to Mr. Wolton's account, Farewell contacted French authorities through an intermediary in the spring of 1981. He offered to work as a mole in the KGB and supplied over 4,000 top secret KGB documents until he lost contact in the fall of 1982.

Mr. Wolton states that Farewell's cooperation with Western intelligence was not discovered, but that the KGB official was implicated in a Moscow murder and as a result was executed.

Western intelligence sources, however, said Farewell was executed as a spy.

Meanwhile, the State Department has confirmed the defection of Soviet KGB intelligence official Col. Viktor P. Gundarev, who left his post in Athens two weeks ago along with his son and a woman believed to be his mistress, Galina N. Gromova.

U.S. intelligence sources said Col. Gundarev's defection was more important than the defection last May of Soviet GRU military intelligence official Sergei Bokhan, who also left the Soviets' Athens diplomatic post. Mr. Bokhan, whose family was turned over to the Soviets by Greek officials, has supplied Western intelligence officials with details of Soviet spy operations, including Soviet support for terrorist groups, sources said.

In London, British police arrested former U.S. Navy Cmdr John Bothwell on espionage charges Friday for allegedly trying to pass information to the Soviet Union.

U.S. intelligence sources described the case as a serious intelligence failure. Cmdr. Bothwell, who worked at a secret anti-submarine warfare school between 1961 and 1963, began a 10-year tour working for U.S. intelligence services in 1974. He then went into business, arranging deals between South Africa and the Soviet Union.